

**EXPLORING NON-SPECIALIST TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES
IN IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL STUDIES IN MALAWI
SECONDARY SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF CENTRAL EAST
EDUCATION DIVISION**

**M.Ed. (CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STUDIES - SOCIAL STUDIES
EDUCATION) THESIS**

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**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

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By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all people who stand by my side in time of happiness as well as in trying moments.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in implementing the subject in some selected Malawi secondary schools in Central East Education Division secondary schools. The study also sought to find out what non-specialist Social Studies teachers thought about their teaching of the subject; factors that affect them in implementing the Social Studies Curriculum as well as coping mechanisms they use in teaching the subject. A qualitative research approach was employed in this study with phenomenology as its methodology. Data were collected through in-depth or open-ended face-to-face interviews and lesson observations. The findings indicated that non-specialist Social Studies teachers felt and thought that the subject is necessary, not just a luxury, in the Malawi school curriculum. As such they had a positive attitude in their efforts because they realised that Social Studies acts as the vanguard in the development of positive attitudes and values which are essential for the development of students into responsible citizens (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2004). As non-specialist teachers and knowing that they are going to be judged by the academic performance of their students, they did not get discouraged by factors that negatively affected their implementation of the subject. Instead, the negative factors made them develop a number of coping mechanisms as their survival strategies, such as intensifying the use of a variety of teaching and learning methods; putting into practice Humanities Teachers Association resolutions; seeking assistance from teachers of other schools; and practising team teaching.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASSP	African Social Studies Programme
ATEM	Association of Teaching English in Malawi
CEED	Central East Education Division
HUTA	Humanities Teachers Association
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NCSS	National Council for the Social Studies
SMASSE	Strengthening of Mathematics and Sciences in Secondary Education
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the study on the experiences of non-specialist teachers in implementing the Social Studies Curriculum in Malawi, using some secondary schools from Central East Education Division (CEED). It starts by giving the origin of Social Studies, the aim of the subject and its introduction in the school curriculum as well as Social Studies curriculum reviews that have taken place in Malawi. After that, the chapter then zeroes in on giving the rationale of the study, problem statement, and purpose of the study, the key research question and sub questions and significance of the study.

1.2 Background and Context of the Study

Social Studies is one of the prescribed courses of study in the curricula of different countries of the world including Malawi. Social Studies education originated from the society's need to teach their children to cope with their physical and social environment in order to satisfy their survival needs and become aware of their heritage and their responsibilities to others (Welton, 2005). In light of this, some people began to examine specialised aspects of human behaviour (Skrething & Sundeen, 1969). Their investigations marked the beginnings of different disciplines such as History, Geography, Philosophy, Economics, Anthropology, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Morals and Ethics. The integration of these disciplines gave birth to the school subject called Social Studies.

The birth of Social Studies as a school subject took place in the United States of America and spread to other countries (Skrething & Sundeen, 1969). Social Studies in Africa, as a discipline, was initiated at the 1968 Mombasa Conference in Kenya (ASSP, 1994). The conference was aimed at introducing Social Studies in all British colonies. The aim was to make citizens aware of the need to develop a better understanding of their cultural identity. Malawi participated in the Mombasa Conference and when members agreed to form an African Social Studies Programme (ASSP), she became a member. The mission of the organisation was to promote the teaching and learning of Social Studies. The association created a secretariat whose four general objectives were as follows:

The first objective was to create awareness and understanding of the evolving social and physical environment as a whole, its natural, human made, cultural, and spiritual resources, together with rational use and conservation of these resources for development (ASSP, 1994).

The second objective was to develop a capacity to learn and acquire skills, including not only the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and calculating, but also the skills of observation, analysis and interference which are essential to the forming of sound judgment (ASSP, 1994).

The third objective was to ensure the acquisition of that relevant knowledge which is an essential prerequisite to personal development as well as to positive personal contribution to the betterment of society (ASSP, 1994).

The fourth objective was to develop a sympathetic application of the diversity and interdependence of all members of the local community, and of the wider national and international community (ASSP, 1994).

Following the 1968 Mombasa Conference resolutions Malawi introduced Social Studies in her education system which was taught through the traditional single subject method as Civics, Geography and History in primary schools; and as History, Geography and Bible Knowledge in secondary schools (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). Tlou (1998) observes that though there was this commitment, the content of the Social Studies curriculum by 1982 was predominantly foreign and had topics on British education primary school Geography, History and Civics.

In 1982, citizenship education was introduced in the Social Studies curriculum in Malawi (Tlou, 1998). The primary focus was to foster in the youth, proper attitudes, obedience, loyalty, discipline, and obedience in addition to learning about local government. The students were supposed to demonstrate high standards of loyalty, discipline, obedience, and honesty. These were emphasized in Civics and History disciplines.

Between 1987 and 1991 the Malawi Institute of Education was mandated to review the Social Studies curriculum for standards one to eight (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). The review resulted in the curriculum adopting an integrated model of themes from disciplines such as History, Geography, and Civics which were named General Studies in junior primary classes (standards one to four) and Social and Environmental Studies in senior primary classes (standards five to eight) (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). The change focused on enabling the students to develop a positive attitude towards environmental control in order to become good citizens (MoEST, 2003).

From 1994 to 1998, the Malawi government undertook a review of the Secondary School Social Studies curriculum with the aim of introducing citizenship education (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). It was felt that citizenship education was going to provide skills, attitudes and values that were to enable students participate actively as citizens of a democracy. Following this review, the implementation of secondary school Social Studies started in 2000 as a core subject in preference to Geography, History, Bible Knowledge and Religious and Moral Education, which were made elective subjects (Hango, 2004).

The subject has been implemented as Social Studies at the junior secondary level (forms one and two) from 2000. At this level, the subject focuses on the individual's moral and ethical development and on imparting skills and knowledge that can enable pupils to play their part in society (Fabiano & Maganga, 2002). At the senior secondary level (forms three and four), the subject is implemented as Social and Development Studies from 2002. The subject, at this level, focuses on providing learners with the knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and values that aim at helping them participate in social and economic development of their communities as effective citizens of a culturally diverse and democratic society in the interdependent world (Fabiano & Maganga, 2002; Laymaman, 2005).

The time this relatively new subject was introduced there were no specialised teachers for it and up to this time the majority of those teaching it are not qualified as Social Studies teachers. The tendency is to use those specialised in other subjects to teach this relatively new subject. It is expected that they will transfer their pedagogical knowledge and skills from their subjects of specialisation to Social Studies.

However, some scholars worldwide have argued against this tendency by saying that such teachers may often be sceptical about the outcomes of a higher order thinking curriculum in an omnipresent state that cherishes interdisciplinary approach (Tan & Gopinathan, 2000, as cited in Kramer-Dahl; Teo & Chia, 2007). Consequently, Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) perceived the nature of Social Studies as a loose confederation of separate subjects which is confusing as it is taught by teachers with no mastery of the subject matter who are re-assigned to teach it yet they may not know what they are supposed to do. With this state of affairs, it is assumed that such teachers may choose to teach only those topics from the themes they are comfortable with leaving out the others thereby rendering learners helpless as well as abandoning the very purpose of the subject (Tan & Gopinathan, 2000, as cited in Kramer-Dahl, Teo & Chia, 2007). Thus, the half-baked learners may fail to put into practice the skills that Social Studies aims at developing in them so that they become productive citizens. This tendency and criticisms against it attracted my interest to explore the experiences of the non-specialist Social Studies teachers in their implementation of the subject.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

All the efforts to have Social Studies in the Malawian school curriculum are in line with the fact that mankind sees in education an indispensable asset in attempting to attain the ideas of tolerance, peace, freedom and social justice (Dube, 2009). In this attempt, Social Studies, as one of the facets of the school curriculum is believed to be acting as the vanguard in the development of positive attitudes and values which are

essential to the development of the student into a responsible citizen (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2004). The implementation of the Social Studies curriculum is in the hands of teachers as its gate keepers.

1.4 Problem Statement

Since Social Studies was introduced in Malawian secondary schools without specialist teachers who were trained to teach the subject in 2000, no study has been conducted to explore the experiences of such teachers in teaching the subject in secondary schools. Studies on the implementation of Social Studies in Malawi (Wyse, 2008; Mhango, 2008) and other countries (Jekayinfa, 2006; Doganay & Sari, 2008; Mhlauli, 2012) show that the implementation of Social Studies is affected by problems such as lack of initial training; lack of in-service training and inadequate resources. These problems are general and they can also be applicable to specialist teachers. The studies have focussed on all teachers not specifically on the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers who are implementing the subject. Therefore, this study explored the experiences of those non-specialist Social Studies teachers as they teach the subject.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The study sought to explore the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the subject in Central East Education Division (CEED) secondary schools in Malawi.

1.6 Key Research Question

The study was guided by the following key research question: What experiences do non-specialist Social Studies teachers have in the implementation of the subject? To unpack the key research question, the following sub-questions were used:

1. What do non-specialist Social Studies teachers think about their teaching of the subject?
2. What factors affect non-specialist Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum?
3. How do non-specialist Social Studies teachers cope up with the implementation of the subject?

1.7 The Researcher's Assumptions

In most Malawian secondary school, Social Studies is one of the subjects that attracts a lot of students in most schools yet it is taught by the majority of teachers who have been trained to teach other subjects. The assumption was that there must be something that has been giving these non-specialist Social Studies teachers impetus to enable them keep the morale of the subject high irrespective of their subjects of specialisation. It was therefore believed that their experiences were going to bring out what has been making them continue making the subject popular yet they were specialised in other subjects.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge by filling the gap in literature on the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers. If taken to another level, the knowledge generated may help to inform, support or challenge the action of introducing the subject in the absence of specialist teachers to handle it.

1.9 Definitions of Terms

Attitude: a positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour (Faulkner, Reeves & Chedzoy, 2004).

Citizenship education: education for cultural integration and sustainable living (Burton & May, 2015).

Experience: experience is understood as the accumulation of knowledge and skills that result from direct participation in activities or events (Faulkner, Reeves & Chedzoy, 2004).

Non-specialist Social Studies teachers: teachers who read other disciplines and not Social Studies in the higher institution but they are teaching (Jekayinfa, 2006).

Social Studies: an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence and help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions as citizens of culturally diverse, democratic society in an inter dependent world. (NCSS, 1992)

Subjective norms: the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour (Faulkner, Reeves & Chedzoy, 2004).

Team Teaching: a strategy that involves a group of teachers working together to plan, conduct, and evaluate the learning activities of the same group of students (Quinn and Kanter, 1984).

1.10 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised in five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the introduction to the study which includes background and context of the study; rationale of the study; problem statement; purpose of the study; key research question; the researcher's assumptions; significance of the study; and definitions of terms. Chapter 2 has presented the review of literature related to Social Studies implementation followed by the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 contains research design; methodology; sampling and sample size; data generation methods; data analysis; ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Presentation and discussion of the research findings is contained in chapter 4. Finally, chapter 5 presents the conclusions; implications of the findings and recommendations. Suggestions on areas for further research have also been given in this last chapter.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the general background to the study. It has outlined the origin of Social Studies. It has further looked at the way Social Studies as a discipline found its way into the Malawian school curriculum, its aims, changes that have taken place in the subject at both primary and secondary school levels, and who implement the subject. The characteristics of those who are implementing the subject at

secondary school level provided a platform where the problem statement originated. The next chapter presents the literature review and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter Overview

The formal introduction of Social Studies in schools worldwide and in Malawian school curriculum stimulated the interest of different scholars to conduct their studies in this field. This chapter reviews literature on the essential issues and inter-relationships associated with the knowledge, arguments and themes that have been explored in Social Studies. The review of related literature in this chapter describes what has been written about non-specialist teachers in different fields, what has been written in Social Studies, how the material has been received by others, and then identifies the gap in literature that this study attempted to fill. The literature review presented in this chapter further elucidates the theoretical framework that undergirded the study.

2.2 Non-specialist teachers

Curriculum implementation depends on teachers as curriculum gate keepers. However, most schools worldwide are confronted with the critical shortage of specialist teachers in all subjects offered (Lakshmi, Rama & Hendrikz, 2007). Consequently, teachers assigned to teach subjects for which they have little education or training. These teachers are referred to as non-specialist teachers. Social Studies is not exempted from being implemented by non-specialist teachers in Malawian secondary schools.

Since no subject has been spared in terms of being implemented by non-specialist teachers, different scholars conducted different studies on this category of teachers in various fields. For instance, Dlamini (2014) observed that Physics was mostly being taught by non-specialist teachers in Swaziland. In his study he asserted that non-specialist in Physics teachers did not have much control over what was taught, resulting in strong framing, which encompassed a reduction in options that they could tap on during the teaching and learning processes.

It was further observed that those non-specialist teachers had limited alternatives of explaining the Physics concepts to the learners. As a result, they were compelled to embrace the content in the manner in which it was presented in the textbook. This encouraged rote learning. The study, then, recommended that non-specialists in Physics should be trained through evening or weekend classes and their professional development must be paid for by government (Dlamini, 2014).

In the same vein, Champion (2013) observed that many secondary schools in Wales use non-specialist teachers to teach Religious Education. His findings indicated that these non-specialist teachers do not have a negative impact on standards in the majority of schools. This agrees with the findings of Rolfe (2001) in his study on the factors which influence primary student teachers' confidence to teach dance in England. In that study, Rolfe (2001) found that non-specialist preservice teachers with more extensive and positive experiences in dance were more likely to be confident, personally interested, and enjoy teaching dance.

Elsewhere, Burton and May (2015), in their study, observe there were few specialist teachers of citizenship education in England. The lack of specialism was due to the fact that citizenship education at that time was a relatively new curriculum subject. Therefore, schools had little choice but to develop citizenship programmes that were cross curricular and taught by non-specialists. Their study found some reluctance amongst non-specialists. However, they further found that some of the teachers in some of the schools had undertaken training in discrete areas of citizenship education such as in-house training through workshops as part of a school teacher training day. That training on citizenship topics and workshops was thought to have an impact on teachers' confidence in the development of skills in pedagogical approaches, such as discussion, debate, or study circle (Burton & May, 2015).

After looking at non-specialist teachers in general and what literature says about them in different fields, the proceeding sections look at what literature says about Social Studies, which is the main focus of this study.

2.3 Historical Development of Social Studies

The idea of introducing Social Studies as a school subject originated from the United States of America (USA) as a way of improving citizenship education. This resulted from the realisation that History, Geography and Civics were inadequate to prepare students for citizenship in a society that had been radically altered by immigration, industrialisation and urbanisation (Skrething & Sundeen, 1969).

From the USA, Social Studies spread to other countries. One of these countries is Britain where teaching started soon after it was introduced in the USA. Salia-Bao (1990) states that the heyday of Social Studies in Britain was the period immediately after the Second World War with the aim of producing good citizens with social skills of all sorts and a store of knowledge that would enable them to assess the social problems of their adult days, live in democratic freedom and peace with their neighbours as well as realise their obligation to the nations of the world.

Britain and other European countries that colonised most African countries, with the aim of transmitting European values, beliefs and traditions to Africa, passed on Social Studies education to their colonies (Skrething & Sundeen, 1969). After attaining independence, African countries Africanised Social Studies by redirecting objectives, content, methods and resources to reflect the content and knowledge, values, attitudes and the skills of the indigenous people it is supposed to serve (Mhlauli, 2012).

2.4 Approaches to the Implementation of Social Studies

Social Studies is either implemented as a multidisciplinary or an interdisciplinary subject (Salia-Bao, 1990). The implementation of Social Studies as the multidisciplinary subject follows the traditional single subject method. In Malawi, especially at primary school level, Civics, Geography and History were previously taught as separate subjects but they were examined as one paper which was called General Paper. However, this multidisciplinary approach was criticised for encouraging drilling and rote learning (Salia-Bao, 1990).

As an interdisciplinary subject, Social Studies is marked by the integrated approach (Jekayinfa, 2006). In this approach, Social Studies focuses the relationships between all aspects of life and learning by drawing themes from the individual academic subjects to discuss all aspects of humans and their environment as well as creating an understanding of human predicament (Salia-Bao, 1990). This is how both primary and secondary school Social Studies in Malawi is implemented currently.

2.5 Views about the Interdisciplinary Nature of Social Studies

The interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies is viewed differently by different scholars. Some scholars hold positive views while others hold negative views about the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies. This section looks at both positive and negative views.

2.5.1 Pro-interdisciplinary Views

From the positive point of view, the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies seems to make the subject alive by trying to address some of the pertinent issues pertaining to the development of productive and reliable citizens. For instance, in the school curriculum, Social Studies plays an important role as a decentralised mechanism of knowledge-generation in which teachers, students, and the local community feel empowered to bring in their own realities from different disciplines since it is open and flexible to include emerging issues (Sutar, 2006).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2003), further observes that Social Studies content from different disciplines helps the child to develop to the full status of an adult with a sound mind and body, and acquire appropriate knowledge

and skills that will enable her or him to live a productive life for both herself or himself and the Malawian society and nation as well as developing high standards of conduct, attitudes and sound judgement.

Furthermore, the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies enables children to understand the society in which they live by learning how the society is structured, managed, and governed, and also about the forces seeking to transform and redirect society in various ways and to question and examine received ideas, institutions, and practices (Sutar, 2006). In this vein, students develop an understanding of their identity and democratic values, to evaluate different points of view, and to examine information critically in order to solve problems and make decisions on issues that are relevant to their lives (Dube, 2009). Thus, Social Studies helps learners to develop knowledge, skills and positive attitudes to function in the civic life of their communities, the nation and the world. It further helps learners to develop a culture of responsible citizenship as well as developing an understanding of the socio-economic and political systems of other communities in the world as well as the need for proper utilization and conservation of the environment (MoEST, 2004).

Again, the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies makes the subject carry a normative responsibility to create and widen the popular base for human values such as freedom, trust, mutual respect, and respect for diversity (Jotia and Matlale, 2011). Thus, Social Studies plays an important role in promoting children's ability to take initiative to critically reflect on social issues that have a bearing on the creative coexistence between individual good and collective good (NCSS, 2008). Sutar (2006) suggests that this critical reflection presupposes a comprehensive curriculum in which

both teachers and learners participate in generating knowledge without any latent and manifest forces of coercion which makes them stand the best chance of making teaching and learning interesting as well as enjoyable.

In addition, Arweck and Nesbitt (2004) state that Social Studies is the vanguard in the development of positive attitudes and values which are essential to the development of the student. In confronting the challenges that the future holds in store, mankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempts to attain the ideas of tolerance, peace, freedom and social justice (Dube, 2009). Thus, the Social Studies classroom and the learning experiences provided by the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies with value laden disciplines create the atmosphere in which values and attitudes can flourish. As a result, students are expected to come to act upon the core values such as human dignity, honesty, equality, cooperation, self-worth, national pride and self-discipline, and as such develop into responsible citizens (Merritt, 1961). This helps in producing citizens with good morals because they are going to cherish what they value.

Still more, the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies enables learners to appreciate that people have become geographically mobile, politically conscious, and entrepreneurial in finding alternative economic activities (NCSS, 2008). This is associated with more than one academic discipline but the information is necessary for future citizens. In this case, Social Studies, because of its interdisciplinary nature, plays an important role of developing entrepreneurial skills and geographical knowledge as well as a commitment to community and national development (Wiggins, 1993).

The different disciplines that constitute Social Studies help students understand their roots, see their connections to the past, comprehend their context, recognize the commonality of people across time, appreciate the delicate balance of rights and responsibilities in an open society, and develop the habits of thoughtful analysis and reflective thinking (Sutar, 2006). This gives students the knowledge, intellectual skills, civic understandings, and dispositions toward democratic values that are necessary to function effectively in society.

It is also worth mentioning that Social Studies instruction helps students assume their role as responsible citizens in a democracy and as active contributors to a society that is increasingly diverse and interdependent with other nations of the world (Sutar, 2006). For instance, students are enabled to use the knowledge and skills acquired to examine different aspects of life (Beyer, 1988). This also enables the teachers to have a wide variety of teaching and learning resources and approaches that ensure that learning has to take place where students are going to develop and use their critical thinking skills. With information from different disciplines, students learn to consult and interpret information from a wide variety of sources, such as original documents, speeches, cartoons, artefacts, photos, art, music, architecture, literature, drama, dance, popular culture, biographies, journals, folklore, historic places, and oral histories (Jotia, & Matlale, 2011).

Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies increases intellectual proficiency. The themes in the Social Studies syllabus have a disciplined focus combining content and process, but in each theme and its topics there is provision for synthesis and connecting ideas and knowledge from one discipline to another

(MoEST, 2003). These synthesis statements lead to instruction that provides a rich context of the subject and increasing intellectual proficiency (Beyer, 1988). Therefore, the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies is not as a confusing and vague mixture of this and that from everywhere as claimed by Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) but a systematically woven web of knowledge that has the achievable goal in the academic cycles.

It is further argued that the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies makes it a democratic curriculum which acts as an initiative to inculcate democratic values in citizens from an early age. Jotia and Matlale (2011) opine that, Social Studies through the integration of the concepts and orientations of all social science subjects and humanities in the content, makes the child the centre of the education process. Consequently, this democratic curriculum exposes the children to democratic participation at an early stage which in turn enables them to develop strong democracies that are going to support sustainable development, food production and employment (Jotia & Matlale, 2011).

2.5.2 Views against the Interdisciplinary Nature of Social Studies

The interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies is negatively viewed by those who focus on the hurdles that it faces during its implementation. For example, the disciplines that make up the Social Studies such as Geography, History, Civics, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, Law, Philosophy, Anthropology, Religious and Moral Education, and Sociology, have distinct methodologies that often justify the preservation of boundaries (Sutar, 2006). This makes it difficult for some teachers

who may prefer single discipline approaches. As a result, this interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies may face resistance to change since some teachers may prefer single discipline approach (Jekayinfa, 2006).

In addition to that, it is argued that content from different disciplines that constitute one school subject is difficult to cover within the specified period of the school calendar. Kramer-Dahl, Teo and Chia, (2007) observe that:

Simultaneous demands on teachers to ‘cover’ the content, tightly prescribed in the syllabus and the sole textbook, produced by the Ministry of Education, through a list of topics and samples of typical mandated examination questions, add to their pedagogical dilemma. These pressures frequently lead to the exigencies of the examination, rather than sound pedagogical principles, driving what goes on in Social Studies classrooms (p. 170).

As a result, to catch up with time, teachers may end up transmitting information which requires learners to memorise an avalanche of facts for the sake of passing examinations (Brameld, 1965). This brings in the popular perception of Social Studies as a non-utility subject which is there just to help learners pass examinations.

2.6 Challenges Globally Faced in Social Studies Implementation

Doganay and Sari (2008) evaluated opinions of Social Studies teachers on Social Studies curriculum in Turkey. They found that Social Studies implementation was affected by lack of in-service training of teachers; lack of educational technologies

and materials; lack of applicability of the curriculum to the conditions of different schools which have different socio-cultural characteristics; and lack of parents and society support.

Elsewhere, Jekayinfa (2006) found that majority of teachers in Nigeria indicated favourable perception of the Social Studies curriculum. It was, however, noted that significant differences existed in the perception of teachers based on their specialization and experience. Based on the findings, Jekayinfa (2006) recommended that teachers who would implement Social Studies curriculum should be sensitized and prepared for the task. In agreement with this recommendation, Fitchett, Heafner and Lambert (2012) added that, for successful citizenship education, greater content area knowledge is necessary for teachers to be able to explain how learning experiences in Social Studies make a difference in student's role in a democratic society. This knowledge enables teachers to evaluate Social Studies materials; see their lateral connections to other important topics in the curriculum and select supplementary materials needed as the basis for the effective direction of subject matter to desired results (Thorntorn, 2005).

Furthermore, Mhlauli (2012) explored the Social Studies teachers' perceptions of the problems and challenges they face in the teaching of Social Studies in primary schools in Botswana. He found that Social Studies teachers are faced with enormous challenges such as lack of recognition; inadequate resources; lower qualifications and lack of understanding of citizenship education, in their effort to develop ideal citizens.

Mhlauli (2012) then concluded that the status of Social Studies within the school establishment in Botswana has turned out to be its nemesis as it militates against the growth of the subject.

In Malawi, Wyse (2008) and Mhango (2008) noted that there are very few teachers who can comfortably teach Social Studies due to lack of training. It is noted that few teachers among the majority of teachers teaching Social Studies just underwent a three-day orientation which is not enough for one to be fully conversant with the subject matter which is not his or her area of specialisation. It is then suggested that this lack of trained Social Studies teachers is one of the factors that cause the discrepancy between the state's intended curriculum and the teachers' enacted curriculum (Mhango, 2008).

It has therefore been observed that literature on the implementation of Social Studies in Malawi focuses on universal challenges that affect all teachers not specifically on the experiences of non-specialist teachers who are teaching the subject. For instance, Mhango (2008) observes that the available literature in Malawi attributes teachers' failure in handling the Social Studies curriculum to the challenges they face in the classrooms like large class size, and lack of teaching and learning resources. These challenges are universal and they are not only faced by non-specialist Social Studies teachers. This observation resonates with the fact that non-specialist Social Studies teachers' experiences have not yet been explored. This study, therefore, attempted to

fill that gap. The Theory of Reasoned Action was used to help in exploring the experiences of teachers who were not trained to teach Social Studies but they had volunteered to teach the subject.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study used the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action proposes that the central determinant of behaviour is an individual's intention to perform that behaviour. An intention is a likelihood that someone will behave in a particular way in specific situations (Lezin, 2007).

As the main motivator of behaviour, an intention is influenced by attitude and subjective norms. An attitude is a positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour. Subjective norms, on the other hand, are the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour (Faulkner, Reeves & Chedzoy, 2004). On the basis of these factors, the Theory of Reasoned Action looks at a person's attitudes towards a certain behaviour and the subjective norms of influential people and groups that could influence those attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Furthermore, the Theory of Reasoned Action postulates that one's attitudes towards a particular behaviour are influenced by his or her beliefs about the outcome of the behaviour and his or her evaluation of the potential outcome (Lezin, 2007). The important aspect of one's attitude is whether or not it is positive, negative, or neutral.

On the other hand, subjective norms are influenced by one's perceptions of the beliefs of those around him or her. The Theory of Reasoned Action, therefore, assumes that a human being has a belief about whether or not the individuals and groups around him or her would approve or disapprove of his or her behaviour; and how motivated one is to comply with their views (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

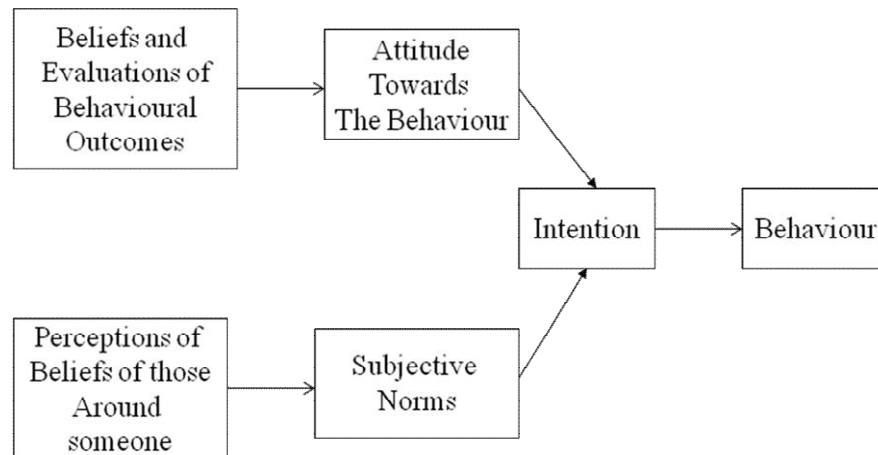


Figure 1: The Theory of Reasoned Action

Source: Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975

In the research process, the Theory of Reasoned Action provides a framework for exploring the underlying reasons for a person's intent to behave in a certain way by focusing on attitudes and subjective norms (Faulkner, Reeves & Chedzoy, 2004). In this line of thought, it is stated that the more we understand the attitudes and norms that influence intent, the more accurately our interventions can be designed to influence these in a desired direction (Lezin, 2007).

In this study, the Theory of Reasoned Action provided the framework to the researcher for exploring the experiences that non-specialist Social Studies teachers

have generated from their intentions on implementing the subject. To do this, the researcher explored non-specialist Social Studies teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of the subject and the subjective norms of influential people and groups that could influence those attitudes in line with factors that positively and negatively affect their implementation of Social Studies. The products of the influence of these teachers' attitudes and the subjective norms on their intentions and behaviour on implementing Social Studies were the experiences which this study explored.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature related to non-specialist teachers in general then it has narrowed down to the implementation of Social Studies from the global perspective to the local perspective. This has been done by looking at the historical development of Social Studies; approaches to the implementation of Social Studies; positive and negative views about the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies; and challenges globally and locally faced in the implementation of the subject. The chapter has finished with the theoretical framework based on the Theory of Reasoned Action which acted as the lens through which the study was done. The next chapter describes research design and methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that were used in this study. This involves describing the research design; methodology; sampling and sample size; data generation; data analysis; ethical considerations; and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a qualitative research with phenomenology as its methodology. Qualitative research assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of a situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993; Cresswell, 1998). Qualitative research is, therefore, interested in gaining insight into, and understanding of a phenomenon. This allows the researcher to understand the meaning people have constructed in the way they make sense of their world and the experience they have in the world.

In this study, the qualitative research paradigm enabled the researcher to attempt to capture data “from the inside” through a process of deep attentiveness; empathetic understanding; and suspending or bracketing preconceptions about the topics under discussion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In so doing, the researcher was helped to illuminate the particulars of human experience in the context of a common

phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). Therefore, it enabled the generation of multiple accounts of a common experience across participants as well as individual accounts in specific contexts.

Consequently, the application of the qualitative paradigm was considered critical to this study for the researcher to understand and describe the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers on the implementation of Social Studies within the Central East Education Division secondary schools.

3.3 Methodology

The study employed phenomenology as the methodology for collecting and analysing data. Phenomenology is a methodological point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality (English and English, 1958, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007). It is, therefore, a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Cresswell, 2009).

The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, and to identify phenomena in terms of how they are perceived by the actors in a situation (Lester, 1999). This translates into gathering deep information through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and presenting it from the perspective of the research participant(s) (Moustakas, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Furthermore, phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, 'bracketing' taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving phenomena (Lester, 1999). This involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Cresswell, 2009). Throughout the process the researcher sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand the experiences of the participants in the study.

3.4 Sampling and Sample Size

Non-specialist Social Studies teachers, as key players in the study were sampled through stratified sampling. The sample included six non-specialist Social Studies teachers teaching Social Studies in secondary schools within the Central East Education Division. In total there were six teachers from three secondary schools within the Central East Education Division. Two teachers were drawn from each of the three schools out of which one was the form one teacher and the other was the one teaching form three. These classes were chosen because they were not involved in national examinations and teachers from these classes could not feel heavily disturbed in their preparation of students for national examinations. The schools from which the participants were drawn were randomly selected.

This number of participants was reasonable for this phenomenological study since this strategy involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Cresswell, 2009).

3.5 Data Generation Methods

Phenomenology seeks to unveil how individuals go about making sense of their direct experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This is done through in-depth interviews, participant observation or exploration of pre-produced texts (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In-depth interviews help in drawing out rich descriptions of lived experiences where the interviewee is encouraged to further reflect on various aspects of his or her descriptions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). On the other hand, pre-produced texts such as books, journals, magazines or letters contain rich phenomenological information that reflects people lived experiences (O'Leary, 2004).

In this research, the researcher sought to understand the experiences from the participants' point of view. Phenomenology, in this study, helped in bringing to the fore the experiences of individuals from their own perspectives on the implementation of Social Studies, thereby allowing the research to inform, support or challenge policy and action (Lester, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This was done by generating data through unstructured in-depth face-to-face interviews with the help of the interview guide (Appendix 1). These unstructured in-depth face-to-face interviews helped to understand and interpret the experiences the participants had been going through in implementing Social Studies, the subject they did not specialise in. The interviews were recorded using a cell phone.

As the follow-up to unstructured in-depth face-to-face interviews, lesson observations were also conducted in order to see the relationship between what the respondents

were saying and what they were actually doing in class. The lesson observations were done with the help of the observation checklist (Appendix 2). Therefore, all the six teachers interviewed were observed once after necessary arrangements were made.

In addition to that, data were generated through participant observation from the Humanities Teachers Association (HUTA) meetings and seminars for Social Studies teachers. This was done after seeking consent from organisers and participants on the purpose of the data to be generated. The Humanities Teachers Association is an association of Central East Education Division humanities teachers established on 25th May, 2012 with the aim of enhancing regular interaction of teachers on the promotion of humanities subjects through workshops and seminars for individual humanities subjects. Any humanities teacher within the division is a member of the association and this means that the researcher, as a humanities teacher within the Central East Education Division, was a member of this association. Those Humanities Teachers Association (HUTA) meetings and seminars for Social Studies teachers helped in bring together Social Studies teachers from different schools within the Central East Education. This pool of Social Studies teachers included some who were specialist teachers for the subject while the majority were non-specialists.

The researcher took advantage of the meetings of Social Studies teachers organised by the Humanities Teachers Association to gather experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers as they were giving accounts of what they had been going through in the implementation of the subject. Here, the researcher interacted with the participants through unstructured group interviews with the help of the same interview guide used

during unstructured in-depth face-to-face interviews (Appendix 1) as he was trying to learn the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers. Data from those unstructured group interviews were recorded in the field note book as field notes.

3.6 Data Analysis

After generation, the data were analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was done by, first, listening to recorded interviews and then transcribing them while paying attention to literal statements (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). After transcribing the data, the researcher read through interview transcripts in order to find recurrent themes. To do that, the researcher approached the research data with an openness to whatever meanings emerged in order to elicit the units of general meaning.

During this process, the researcher suspended his meanings and interpretations and entered into the world of the unique individuals who were interviewed. This is called bracketing the researcher's response to separate parts of the conversation and to have let the event emerge as a meaningful whole (Hycner, 1985). Here, bracketing helped the researcher use the interviewee's world-view in order to understand the meaning of what that person was saying, rather than what the researcher expected that person to say.

The reading process was done hand in hand with listening to the entire recordings several times as well and reading the transcription of face to face interviews, lesson and participant observations checklists several times in order to provide a context for the emergence of specific units of meaning and themes. This was done to help the

researcher familiarise himself with data. In the long run, the data were coded according to the emerging themes. This process involved noticing relevant phenomena and scrutinising them in order to find commonalities and differences. The common codes were named and then categorised into meaningful units. The categories that emerged were listed and grouped into units of relevant meaning.

The researcher then reduced key terms and phrases to create clusters by looking over the list of units of relevant meaning and eliminating those which were clearly redundant to others previously listed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was done several times as different clustering patterns were tried. The data were then arranged according to themes and key issues drawn out from the participants' lived experiences (O'Leary, 2004). Having analysed the data, the findings were reported robustly, including direct quotes from the participants to illustrate points without compromising confidentiality (Connell, 1985).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the study did not violate the rights of the participants, the interviews were based on a range of ethical issues that included informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy (Blaxter et al., 2001; Cohen et al., 2007).

Informed consent is an important ethical consideration. Its major aim is to ensure that potential participants fully understand what they are being asked to do and that they are informed if there are any potential negative consequences of such participation (Homan, 1991). In this study, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their role in the study, what was involved, intended outcomes and benefits of

the study as a basis for volunteering to participate in the study. The researcher ensured that the participants understood what they were getting involved in before conducting the interviews and sought their consent with the help of the information sheet (Appendix 3)

Furthermore, participants were also assured of confidentiality (Appendix 3). This means that the researcher knows who the participants are, but that their identity would not be revealed in any way in the resulting report (Polonsky, 1998). In this study, the participants were assured that their names were not going to appear in the final write up and the information they gave was going to be confidentially treated (Cohen et al., 2007; Blaxter et al., 2001). This was done to ensure respect for the dignity of participants in the study.

On top of that, the researcher went into the schools upon arrangement with the school authorities and the participants at their convenient time (Appendix 4). In addition to that, the participants were not forced to answer questions they felt not comfortable with and the interviews were conducted with the participants' consent (Cohen et al., 2007).

Another ethical consideration that was taken into account was anonymity. This was employed in order to ensure that what participants said could not be traced back to them upon producing the final report (Blaxter et al., 2001). Participants in this study were, therefore, assured that they would be treated anonymously and their names

would not be disclosed anywhere in the final report. They were assured that they would be treated as teacher A, B, C, D, E or F and the schools they were coming from would be identified as school 1, 2 or 3.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of the study was the fact that the researcher was one of non-specialist Social Studies teachers. His experiences in implementing the subject would bring bias that would have influenced the outcomes of the study. However, the researcher bracketed his meanings and interpretations and entered into the world of the unique individuals who were interviewed. This helped the researcher use the interviewee's world-view in order to understand the meaning of what that person was saying, rather than what the researcher expected that person to say thereby reducing his bias. On top of that, the researcher triangulated data generation methods to ensure that the findings were not in any way influenced by his bias.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described and justified the research design and methodology used in this study. This has included a description and discussion of the research design; methodology; sampling and sample size; data generation methods; data analysis procedure; ethical considerations; and limitations of the study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study and discussions of those findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter Overview

The study explored experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the subject. This was done by focusing on these teachers' evaluation of their involvement in the implementation of the subject and their perceived social pressures to effectively perform their tasks or not. These included their thoughts and feelings about their teaching of the subject; factors that positively or negatively affect them in their implementation of the subject; and coping mechanisms they put in place. To do that, in-depth interviews, lesson observations and participant observations were conducted. This chapter presents the findings and discussions of those findings.

4.2 Non-specialist Social Studies Teachers' Intentions to Teach the Subject

In this study, experience is understood as the accumulation of knowledge and skills that result from direct participation in activities or events. Therefore, non-specialist Social Studies teachers have accumulated a certain body of knowledge and skills from their direct participation in the implementation of the subject. The theory of Reasoned Action, which undergirded this study, postulates that one's experiences are shaped by his or her intention to perform a certain behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This theory further suggests that one's intention is influenced by his or her attitudes towards a certain behaviour and the subjective norms of influential people and groups

that could influence those attitudes. The intentions of non-specialist Social Studies teachers on their teaching of the subject from the findings are discussed below with the focus on their attitudes towards their involvement in the implementation of the subject.

4.1.1 Attitudes towards the Teaching of the Subject

The term attitude, in this study, is understood as one's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour (Faulkner, Reeves & Chedzoy, 2004). Lezin (2007) further expounds that one's attitudes towards a particular behaviour are influenced by his or her beliefs about the outcome of the behaviour and his or her evaluation of the potential outcome. Therefore, the findings on non-specialist Social Studies teachers' attitudes towards their teaching of the subject discussed below are presented along this line of thought, which is one of the postulations of the Theory of Reasoned Action.

4.2.1 Beliefs about the Teaching of the Subject

From both face-to-face interviews and participant observation, it was found that most respondents think and believe that Social Studies is a worthwhile subject. For instance, one teacher had this to say:

From my participation in the implementation of the subject, I have come to know that this subject is important because it helps in moulding the desired character of a person in as far as responsible citizenship is concerned. I am saying so because I have found that it deals with what happens in real life not abstract things. These things play an important role in the development of survival skills in the students so as to be reliable citizens of this nation in particular and the ever-changing world as a whole (Teacher A - School 1).

These ideas give non-specialist Social Studies teachers the impetus to teach with enthusiasm because they claimed that they believe that the subject contributes to the development of an informed and active citizen because it deals with real life experiences and problems humankind is facing. Thus, they believe that it can help learners to be development conscious.

In addition to that, non-specialist Social Studies teachers think and believe that their teaching of the subject may help in moulding the well-informed citizenry. Teacher F from school 3 claimed that:

The subject presents current and past issues. These issues affect students' lives and the nation at large. Therefore, teaching these issues will enable learners to avoid past mistakes in order to achieve a holistic development. Again, the knowledge that students are supposed to acquire revolves around issues that help one to avoid risking his or her life as well as participating actively in issues that affect him or her and other people. In so doing, the potential of the outcomes of my teaching of the subject is that the well-informed citizenry moulded by the subject will be able to ensure the promotion of good governance and a better understanding of human rights. These may improve interrelationships among the people which in turn may result in continued development and peaceful coexistence (Teacher F – School 3).

These findings show that what non-specialist Social Studies teachers think and believe about their teaching of the subject help them develop positive attitudes towards their efforts. They have their underlying reasons (such as the ones given in the above excerpts) for their intents to implement the subject. Their beliefs about the

outcome of the implementation of the subject and their evaluation of the potential outcome of their teaching of the subject give them courage to teach the subject. This makes them try their best in order to contribute to the development of the nation by helping in preparing reliable citizens.

4.2.2 Their Feelings about the Teaching of Social Studies

The findings showed that some of the teachers had resentment at first when they were asked to teach the subject because it was not their area of specialisation. However, their interaction with Social Studies specialist teachers during Humanities Teachers Association workshops made some of non-specialist teachers got acclimatized to the subject matter and eventually developed a liking for the subject. In that view, teacher C from school 2 had this to say:

At first I was feeling as if I was betrayed because I had to be learning the subject before delivering the knowledge to students because I did not specialise in it. With the coming in of the Humanities Teachers Association and its workshops which act as in-service trainings, I now feel comfortable since I have internalised its content and requirements. I have also realised that this subject's content is interconnected with other subjects some of which are my major and minor areas of specialisation (Teacher C - School 2).

While on the same, other respondents indicated that they were more than willing to take up the challenge because they thought that for one to be a good teacher he or she must be a good learner. This is what teacher B from school 1 said:

When I was asked to teach Social Studies, I was more than willing to do that despite the fact that it was not my subject of specialisation. As a professional teacher, I felt that taking up that challenge was going to

make me the good teacher because I knew I was going to be trying my best to teach myself before teaching others. From the time I started teaching the subject up to now, I feel comfortable and competent. In addition to that, I am able to produce better results when my students sit for national examinations (Teacher B - School 1).

These views were also expressed by other teachers during the workshop for Social Studies teachers as part of the activities of the Humanities Teachers' Association. The bottom line here is that non-specialist Social Studies teachers, through their participation in the Humanities Teachers' Association workshops, develop the positive feeling about their teaching of the subject although it is not their area of specialisation. The positive feeling, they have about the subject plays an important role in shaping the experiences of these non-specialist Social Studies teachers.

From these findings, it is observed that non-specialist Social Studies teachers' intentions to continue implementing the subject determine what they think, believe and feel about the outcomes of their contributions towards the attainment of national goals of education through this curriculum facet. This is a reflection of postulation of the Theory of Reasoned Action that a person's behaviour is influenced by his or her beliefs about the outcome of the behaviour and his or her evaluation of the potential outcome (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

This theory further stipulates that if one strongly believes his or her actions will lead to a desirable outcome, then he or she has the positive attitude toward that behaviour. The findings on non-specialist Social Studies teachers' intentions (in terms of their

attitudes) towards their implementation of the subject reflect the above stated underlying assumptions of the Theory of Reasoned Action. This is so because these teachers, as curriculum gatekeepers, develop the positive attitudes towards their efforts after realizing that Social Studies acts as the vanguard in the development of positive attitudes and values which are essential to the development of the student into a responsible citizen (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2004). These findings, therefore, agree with Campion's (2013) findings which indicated that Religious Education non-specialist teachers did not have a negative impact on standards in the majority of schools in Wales.

4.3 Factors that Affect Implementation of Social Studies

The implementation of Social Studies by non-specialist teachers is affected by different factors. Some of these factors are positive while others are negative. With respect to the Theory of Reasoned Action, factors that affect the implementation of Social Studies are part and parcel of the subjective norms. These subjective norms are the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). According to the theory, an individual has a sense or belief about whether or not the individuals and groups around him or her would approve or disapprove of the performed behaviour. This goes together with how motivated one is to comply with their views (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Therefore, both positive and negative factors that affect the implementation of Social Studies by non-specialist teachers play an important role in influencing their attitudes towards their efforts as curriculum gate keepers. Below is a discussion of the factors that positively and negatively affect the implementation of Social Studies unmasked from both face-to-face in-depth interviews and participant observations.

4.3.1 Factors that Positively Affect Implementation of Social Studies

The findings from both participant observation and face-to-face interviews showed that non-specialist Social Studies teachers are motivated to teach the subject because of a number of factors that positively affect its implementation. These factors are discussed below.

4.3.1.1 Students Attitudes towards the Subject

Most respondents observed that since the subject is elective, students who choose it are self-motivated. One of the respondents (Teacher E from school 2) had this to say on this matter:

Most of those students who chose Social Studies have positive attitudes towards the subject because they voluntarily opt for it. As a result, they develop a liking for the subject and this makes them resourceful too (Teacher E – school 2).

In the same vein, one of the participants during the Humanities Teachers Association workshop for Social Studies teachers said:

The goodness of the students we have in Social Studies is that they are not forced to study it. They do that out of their own will and this portrays the interest they have in the subject which is shown in their positive attitudes towards it. Most of these students try their level best to be inquisitive in knowing more about the subject matter since they are self-motivated. This also makes me enjoy teaching the subject despite the fact that it is not my area of specialisation.

Where students are self-motivated, teachers are also motivated and they are again enabled to employ a variety of teaching and learning methods that they are comfortable with. It was further found that those self-motivated students make it easy for teachers in ensuring the attainment of objectives.

4.3.1.2 Popularity of Social Studies as a Subject

Most of the respondents claimed that Social Studies is one of the popular subjects in different schools. They observed that Social Studies, as opposed to other elective subjects, attracts a lot of students. This is taken as clear evidence that the subject is popular. To justify the claim that Social Studies is popular and as such motivating non-specialist teachers to implement it, teacher F from school 3 had this to say:

From the time I started teaching Social Studies, I have found that it is liked by a lot of students despite the fact that it is an elective subject. The reason why they like the subject is that they know that the subject is relevant because it deals with day-to-day life experiences which have a positive impact on their lives as productive and reliable citizens. This realisation by students themselves makes the subject popular as well as encouraging me to try my best in implementing the subject. On top of that, I have known that my efforts are not in vain because I am teaching the subject that is relevant and popular. As a result, no one can discourage me from participating in the implementation of the subject despite the fact that I did not specialise in it (Teacher F – School 3).

These observations show that the popularity of Social Studies is playing an important role in positively affecting non-specialist teachers in implementing it. They develop confidence in themselves because they come to realise that their efforts are not in

vain. In addition, the large numbers of students taking the subject make them feel that the students have trust and hope in them although the subject is not their area of specialisation.

4.3.1.3 Flexibility of Social Studies as a Subject

It was found that non-specialist Social Studies teachers involved in the study further observed that the subject is flexible in terms of the requirements of its content. They claimed that Social Studies does not require special equipment and infrastructure such as laboratories. In addition to that, the content of the subject matter for Social Studies can be derived from multiple sources which are locally found. To buttress this claim, teacher D from school 2 had this to say:

Social Studies is a flexible subject because it gives room for the application of a variety of teaching and learning methods. In terms of information, it is easy to source information from different sources such as newspapers, radios, television, books and other archival sources and the elderly in the society on other topics. The subject is also less demanding in terms of teaching infrastructure and equipment since it does not require laboratories or any special apparatus for students to understand the subject matter. This gives me impetus to apply the pedagogical knowledge I have from my subject of specialisation to this subject and achieve the objectives successfully (Teacher D – School 2).

The flexibility of Social Studies makes it easy for non-specialist teachers to apply pedagogical skills from their subjects of specialisation. This in turn motivates them to effectively implement the subject thereby positively affecting the implementation of Social Studies as well as helping the students the way they are supposed to be assisted.

4.3.1.4 Establishment of Humanities Teachers Association

The Humanities Teachers Association is an association of Central East Education Division humanities teachers which was established on 25th May, 2012 with the aim of enhancing regular interaction of teachers on the promotion of humanities subjects through workshops and seminars for individual humanities subjects. One of the activities of the Humanities Teachers Association within the Central East Education Division is to conduct workshops for specific humanities subject teachers. These workshops give teachers for specific humanities subjects the opportunity to share their experiences and skills as well as exploring ways of improving their teaching practices.

From both in-depth interviews and participant observation, it was found that non-specialist Social Studies teachers benefit from workshops for teachers of this subject. This is evidenced by what, teacher A from school 1 said:

I am encouraged to implement the subject by the knowledge and skills I get from Humanities Teachers Association workshops for Social Studies teachers. These workshops bring together all teachers from various secondary schools within the Central East Education Division and some of them are specialist Social Studies teachers who have recently graduated from Domasi College of Education. These teachers help us with pedagogical skills and information on how we should tackle some topics in Social Studies (Teacher A – School 1).

It can be argued that the view above implies that the said workshops act as in-service trainings as well as refresher courses for non-specialist Social Studies teachers. The

knowledge and skills they gain from these workshops give them confidence to keep on implementing Social Studies despite the fact that it is not their subject of specialisation. As a result, the activities of the Humanities Teachers Association within the Central East Education Division positively contributes to the effective implementation of Social Studies by non-specialist teachers. This agrees with Burton and May (2015) who established that some of the teachers in some of the schools in England had undertaken training in discrete areas of citizenship education such as in-house training through workshops as part of a school teacher training day.

4.3.2 Factors that Negatively Affect Implementation of Social Studies

Although non-specialist Social Studies teachers gain their confidence from the above discussed factors that positively affect their implementation of the subject, there are other factors that attempt to create stumbling blocks in their endeavours. The discussion of those factors that negatively affect the implementation of Social Studies by non-specialist teachers from the findings of this study is given below.

4.3.2.1 Discouragement by Fellow Teachers

During in-depth interviews and participant observation most participants lamented that their efforts to effectively implement Social Studies are hindered by discouragement by fellow teachers who teach other subjects. One of the participants (who happened to be a non-specialist Social Studies Teacher) during one of the Humanities Teachers Association workshops for Social Studies teachers complained that:

Some fellow teachers undermine Social Studies claiming that it is a non-utility subject and that is why it is given to anyone. They said that

those of us teaching it have nothing to do because we are just wasting our time with the subject that has no future. Worse still, such teachers pass that information to some students thereby encouraging them to develop negative attitudes towards the subject. This puts us in an awkward situation where we spend much time defending the subject before students so as to make them understand what it is all about. In the end we fail to finish the syllabus by the end of the academic year.

Under the Theory of Reasoned Action, the discouragement by some fellow teachers is an example of the subjective norms of influential people and groups that could influence non-specialist Social Studies teachers' attitudes. This agrees with what Mhlauli (2012) claimed that most Social Studies teachers in Botswana are affected by lack of recognition from other quarters which hinders the growth of the subject. In the same fashion, the act of undermining Social Studies observed in this study attempts make non-specialist Social Studies teachers develop negative attitudes towards the subject, thereby militating against the growth of the subject.

4.3.2.2 Disproportional Teacher-Student Ratio and Insufficient Resources

The findings show that the popularity of Social Studies results in a large number of students opting for it in some schools. This leads to disproportional teacher-pupil ratio. The participants during in-depth interviews and Humanities Teachers Association workshops observed that Social Studies attracts a lot of students despite the fact that it is an elective subject. This, in turn, results in disproportional teacher-pupil ratio and insufficient resources. Below is what one of the participants said during one of the Humanities Teachers Association workshop for Social Studies teachers:

Social Studies attracts many learners despite the fact that it is an elective subject and this leads to disproportional teacher-student ratio. Apart from that, the large numbers of students taking the subject leads to insufficient teaching and learning resources because in most of the schools we work, priority is given to core subjects when it comes to procurement of teaching and learning resources. As a result, few resources are directed towards our subject assuming that it is supposed to be taken by very few students. This hinders our efforts in implementing the subject since we lack necessary resources to cater for the large numbers of students opting for the subject.

This implies that Social Studies needs special attention because, as one of the popular subjects, it is liked by a lot of students while few resources, in terms of both human and material resources, are directed towards its implementation. As a consequence of this, non-specialist Social Studies teachers may tend to feel betrayed as they are given the subject to implement where the numbers of those attending to it is greater than the available resources.

4.3.2.3 Dearth of Reading Culture

Some respondents bemoaned the dearth of reading culture in their schools as another factor that negatively affects the implementation of Social Studies. In line with this, Teacher C from school 2 observed that:

Social Studies, as a wide subject requires wide reading and lucky enough, information for the subject can be found even in newspapers. However, most students do not like reading widely but they prefer pamphlets which have sketchy information which is sometimes misleading or waiting for the teacher to give them notes. This also makes them fail to build their vocabulary which in turn results in failure to understand things in English (Teacher C – school 2).

The dearth of reading culture is also reported to have been hindering the implementation of Social Studies because most of the times teachers are expected to give students all the required information and examples. This again, results in students' failure to understand things in English thereby encouraging rote learning. Here students wait for the teacher to furnish them with all the required information so that they just memorise the points without really internalizing the new knowledge. The practice of heaping the responsibility of disseminating all the information on the teachers due to dwindling reading culture is reported to have discouraged non-specialist Social Studies teachers from effectively implementing the subject as they sometimes fail to employ some pedagogical skills that require more input from students.

4.3.2.4 The Overloaded Social Studies Syllabus

Most non-specialist Social Studies teachers observed that the Social Studies syllabus is overloaded and very broad. It includes topics that are also taught in other subjects such as Geography, History, Life Skills, Business Studies and Home Economics. This is said not to tally with the number of periods allocated to the subject on the time table. As a result, most teachers fail to finish covering the syllabus by the end of the academic year. Teacher E from school 3 justified this by saying:

Since our curriculum seems to be examination oriented, Social Studies syllabus is very wide with some topics that are also found in other subjects within the school curriculum. This does not match with the allocated time for one to cover it thoroughly. For instance, Social Studies is given three periods per week yet there are a lot of things that are supposed to be covered per week. This negatively affects someone like me who did not specialise in the subject because I need more time

to internalise the content before delivering it to avoid producing half-baked students. In this situation it becomes difficult to apply some of the pedagogical skills effectively since they seem to be time consuming bearing in mind that limited time is allocated to the subject that has a lot of things to be covered. If I try to be fast during lesson delivery in order to cover more, a lot of students are left behind and this looks as if I am teaching myself. This brings fear in me that the students may not do well during national examinations. (Teacher E – School 3).

The syllabus is overloaded because Social Studies is an interdisciplinary subject that draws content from different disciplines. The problem of having an overloaded Social Studies syllabus resonates with the observation of Kramer-Dahl, Teo and Chia, (2007) that it is difficult to cover the loaded Social Studies content within the specified period of the school calendar.

In this case, non-specialist Social Studies teachers are put in a pedagogical dilemma by simultaneous demands on them to cover the content tightly prescribed in the syllabus, and to make sure that their students are well prepared for national examinations so that they can pass with good grades. This creates the fear that these teachers may end up transmitting information which requires learners to memorise facts for the sake of passing examinations as observed by Brameld (1965).

4.3.2.5 Lack of Support from School Administrators and the Ministry of Education

The findings from both in-depth interviews and participant observations indicated that almost all respondents and participants bemoaned lack of support from administrators

and the Ministry of Education as one of the major challenges in their implementation of Social Studies. For instance, one of the participants during one of the Humanities Teachers Association workshop for Social Studies teachers lamented that:

It is very disturbing that the Ministry of Education has decided that humanities teachers will not be considered for study leave as stipulated in the circular (Ref. No. C31/1/1 dated 18th April, 2013 with the heading “Uncoordinated Training Programmes and associated disruption of teaching and learning processes”) which states that the Ministry will only grant permission for study leave to those going to study Languages, Mathematics and Sciences. Although this circular does not target Social Studies teachers, but all humanities teachers, we, non-specialist Social Studies teachers are affected by virtue of being in the humanities. This lack of support from the ministry will leave us stagnant because our chances of upgrading and continuous professional development are shuttered. Worse still, some of us are implementing the subject which is not our area of specialisation and this development is pulling us down.

Again, these teachers, being specialist of other subjects, need enough support from school administrators. Those involved in the study said that they were happy with the establishment of the Humanities Teachers Association within the division hoping that its activities are going to benefit them because government organised in-service trainings are rarely done. However, it was found that not all non-specialist Social Studies teachers are given a chance to attend the association’s workshops for their subject because school administrators refuse to allow all of them to go claiming that they cannot afford to do so. Unfortunately, it was claimed that those who attend the workshops rarely share the information and skills gained with their colleagues. This

hinders continuous professional development for those teachers who are denied the opportunity to learn from others on how they should improve their practices in implementing Social Studies.

The failure by non-specialist Social Studies teachers to attend workshops that would have helped them due to lack of support from administrators coupled with the ministry's closure of humanities teachers' opportunities for upgrading leave them stagnant. As a result, they tend to feel betrayed because they miss the opportunity to advance their knowledge of the subject matter and other skills. This militates against the growth of Social Studies as observed by Mhlauli (2012) on the status of the subject in Botswana.

4.4 Coping Mechanisms Used by Non-Specialist Social Studies Teachers

Non-specialist Social Studies teachers do not just sit down and being affected by what they go through as they implement the subject. They employ some coping mechanisms to make sure that they try to achieve the desired objectives of Social Studies. The employment of coping mechanisms is their direct response to the perceived social pressures that influence them to effectively perform their tasks. This is deeply rooted from the fact that these non-specialist Social Studies teachers strongly believe their actions will lead to a desirable outcome although they are teaching the subject that is not their area of specialisation. Such line of thought is in tandem with one of the assumptions of the Theory of Reasoned Action which stipulates that one's positive attitude toward a certain behaviour makes him or her believe that his or her actions will not act like the lone voice in the wilderness but will yield positive results (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Through in-depth interviews, participant observation and lesson observations, the study unmasked some of the coping mechanisms that these teachers employ in implementing the subject. Most of the coping mechanisms are derived from the pedagogical knowledge that these teachers were grounded into in their respective areas of specialisation. The coping mechanisms that are used to counteract the obstacles in the implementation of Social Studies in order to be successful are discussed in detail below.

4.4.1 Intensifying Employment of a Variety of Teaching and Learning Methods

Basing on the pedagogical knowledge of their subjects of specialisation, non-specialist Social Studies teachers intensify the employment of a variety of teaching and learning activities in teaching Social Studies. The study established that, although this is not a new concept, it plays an important role in building the confidence among non-specialist Social Studies teachers as they teach the subject. One of the participants during the Humanities Teachers Association workshops for Social Studies teachers supported this coping mechanism as follows:

The pedagogical knowledge that I have in my field of specialisation has a component of using a variety of teaching methods that encourage students to search information from different sources. I have realised that employing this mechanism intensively in the teaching of Social Studies is helpful because it gives learners more opportunities to be resourceful too rather than relying of the teacher to spoon feed them. In the long run, they become motivated and even search for more information from real life situations and experiences thereby making the subject alive. This in turn helps some of us as non-specialist teachers to implement the subject smoothly.

During lesson observations, these teachers were seen using different methods such as group work, pair work, brainstorming, as well as class presentations during their lessons. These methods encouraged students to search information from different sources and share personal experiences. As students were doing that, they were helping each other thereby easing the teacher's task of dealing with each student individually. This mechanism, in turn, helps non-specialist Social Studies teachers to motivate students to help each other as they also benefit from the information that students find from different sources as they prepare for class presentations.

4.4.2 Putting into Practice Humanities Teachers Association Resolutions

Non-Specialist Social Studies teachers try to deal with other factors and challenges they face as they implement the subject by putting into practice the resolutions of the Humanities Teachers Association workshops. One of such resolutions involves the use of different resources that simplify the subject matter. In an attempt to simplify the subject matter, non-specialist Social Studies teachers try their best to source some supplementary materials as well as improvising where necessary. During lesson observations, it was observed that some of these teachers were able to use newspapers, constitutions, songs or audio tapes in order to make sure that their students understand the new knowledge and connect that to their real life experiences.

From the participants' classroom practices, it was observed that this practice is very helpful because it turned abstract things into concrete things thereby enhancing students understanding. Some of the improvised resources such as audio tapes and songs motivate and arouse students' interest in the teaching and learning process. The researcher observed that the resources that some non-specialist Social Studies

teachers were using helped students know the relevance of the subject as well as the applicability of the content covered. This results in helping students develop positive attitude towards the subject which in turn motivates non-specialist Social Studies teachers to teach with enthusiasm.

Another resolution that is put into practice is that of encouraging students to read widely. From lesson observations it was found that some non-specialist Social Studies teachers have been trying to instil the reading culture in their students by encouraging them to read different books. They encourage their students to do that because Social Studies has been approached differently by different writers so that these students should also be able to approach the subject according to their experiences.

To make sure that the students read widely, they were given assignments on topics that were not yet covered and were also encouraged to be free to ask for some reading materials where the required information may be found. The teachers assess those assignments and display the results as a way of encouraging students to work hard so that they should be doing better. This encourages them to read widely. In so doing, syllabus coverage widens thereby enabling the teachers to cover a lot of topics before the students sit for national examinations. In the end the problem of having the wider syllabus is somehow addressed.

4.4.3 Seeking Assistance from Teachers of other Schools

Some non-specialist Social Studies teachers take advantage of cluster activities to humble themselves and consult teachers from other schools to orient them on other

aspects of the subject. It was found that within different clusters, there are at least one or two teachers from Domasi College of Education who were trained as specialists of Social Studies. On this mechanism, teacher D from school 2 had this to say:

To ensure that I am not short-changing my students, I seek assistance from Social Studies specialist teacher we have in our cluster to help me gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter I am supposed to share with the learners. The assistance that I teachers get from these colleagues gives me confidence to ensure the smooth implementation of the subject (Teacher D – school 2).

4.4.4 Team Teaching

From in-depth interviews with non-specialist Social Studies teachers it was found that they do team teaching as one of the coping mechanisms. As a matter of clarification, team teaching is defined as a strategy that involves a group of teachers working together to plan, conduct, and evaluate the learning activities of the same group of students (Quinn and Kanter, 1984). These non-specialist Social Studies teachers work hand in hand with teachers of other subjects that have similar topics. During the one of the Humanities Teachers Association workshops for Social Studies teachers, this what some non-specialist teachers had to say:

We ask our fellow teachers teaching other subjects that have some topics with the same content as those in Social Studies to work together with us in planning for that topic. We even ask these teachers to teach other topics together with the one assigned that specific class in order that the desired objectives are achieved.

The idea of practising team teaching is believed to improve students' performance by exposing them to views and skills of more than one teacher which helps them develop a more mature understanding of the new knowledge (Quinn & Kanter, 1984). This also helps teachers learn from others and improve their professional expertise and interpersonal relationships with their fellow teachers.

4.5 Application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to the findings

In line with the Theory of Reasoned Action, the above discussed findings can be summarised diagrammatically as shown in figure 2:

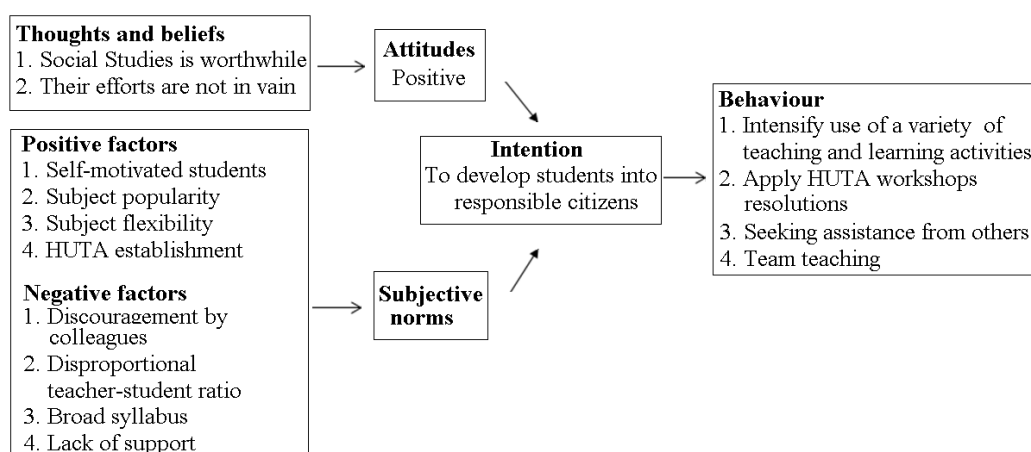


Figure 2: Application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to discussed findings

This diagram shows that that the findings indicate that non-specialist Social Studies teachers' intention to implement the subject is influenced by their beliefs and thoughts about the subject and factors that affect their efforts either negatively or positively. Their beliefs and thoughts about the subject help them develop positive attitudes. On the other hand, factors that affect their implementation of the subject are

the subjective norms that also have an impact on their intentions. Their intentions in taking part in developing students into responsible citizens lead to employment of different coping mechanisms which are what the Theory of Reasoned Action refer to as the behaviour that one performs.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study and their discussions. It has presented and discussed the findings on non-specialist Social Studies teachers' thoughts and feelings about their teaching of the subject; factors that positively and negatively affect the implementation of the subject; and coping mechanisms employed by these teachers. The next chapter presents conclusions and implications generated by the study as well as suggesting areas for further study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study and their discussions. This chapter presents conclusions and implications generated by the study. It has gone further to suggest areas for further research.

5.2 Conclusions

The study explored experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the subject in the Central East Education Division secondary schools. It focussed on non-specialist Social Studies teachers' thoughts about their teaching of the subject; factors that affect them in their implementation of the subject; and coping mechanisms they use in teaching the subject. The study used the Theory of Reasoned Action as its lens.

The study has found that non-specialist Social Studies teachers do not feel that their efforts are in vain. They feel and think that the subject they implement, despite the fact that it is not their area of specialisation, is a necessity not just a luxury in the Malawian school curriculum. These positive feelings are kept alive by the establishment of the Humanities Teachers Association in the Central East Education Division. Following this association's workshops and in-service trainings, non-specialist teachers develop positive attitudes towards their efforts because they realise

that Social Studies acts as the vanguard in the development of positive attitudes and values which are essential to the development of the student into a responsible citizen (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2004).

The positive attitudes that non-specialist Social Studies teachers develop are buttressed by some factors that positively affect their implementation of the subject. The study has found that there are different factors that motivate these teachers' efforts. These factors include students' positive attitudes towards the subject; popularity of the subject; flexibility of the subject and establishment of the Humanities Teachers Association within the Central East Education Division. These factors enable non-specialist Social Studies teachers to apply the pedagogical knowledge from their subjects of specialisation to this subject and end up producing better results.

Although these non-specialist Social Studies teachers strive for excellence in their implementation of Social Studies with encouragement from their positive attitudes and the above mentioned factors, there are still some of the factors that negatively affect their implementation of the subject. The study uncovered factors such as discouragement by fellow teachers; disproportional teacher-student ratio; dearth of reading culture in students; the overloaded Social Studies syllabus; and lack of support from school management as some of the factors that negatively affect the implementation of Social Studies by non-specialist Social Studies teachers.

However, the factors that negatively affect the implementation of Social Studies do not let down non-specialist Social Studies teachers. Being aware that their efforts are always judged by the results they produce, non-specialist Social Studies teachers use some coping mechanisms in order to overcome some of the factors that negatively affect the implementation of Social Studies. The study has found that non-specialist Social Studies teachers use coping mechanisms such as intensifying the employment of a variety of teaching and learning methods; putting into practice Humanities Teachers Association resolutions; seeking assistance from teachers of other schools; and practising team teaching. These coping mechanisms act as their survival skills in implementing the subject that is not their area of specialisation which in the end produce desirable results, thereby keeping them motivated.

5.3 Implications of the Findings

The findings show that non-specialist Social Studies teachers do not necessarily act as the stumbling block in the implementation of the subject. These teachers have the ability of using their pedagogical knowledge from their areas of specialisation to Social Studies. With motivation from in-service trainings through the Humanities Teachers Association, they tend to develop positive attitudes towards the subject which give them the impetus to build their reputation as well as taking part in moulding students into reliable citizens.

Although it has been found that the Humanities Teachers Association has positively contributed to motivating non-specialist Social Studies teachers, it is the thing of one division (the Central East Education Division) only. This contrasts with what happens in other academic departments in Malawian secondary schools which have national

associations, such as the Association of Teaching English in Malawi (ATEM) for languages, and Strengthening of Mathematics and Sciences in Secondary Education (SMASSE) for sciences. Had it been that the Humanities Teachers Association be made a national association, it therefore implies that its influence may help other non-specialised Social Studies teachers throughout the country.

Furthermore, the study's findings are supportive of the predictions of the Theory of Reasoned Action that the behaviour can be predicted from one's attitudes towards that behaviour and subjective norms. The theory suggests that the person's attitudes and subjective norms may increase the motivation to comply with a norm that supports the persuasive goal (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In line with this, the study has found that the positive attitudes that non-specialist Social Studies teachers develop and the encouragement they get from factors that positively affect their implementation of the subject motivate them to continue implementing the subject. They further devise coping mechanisms as the way of maintaining their motivation to comply with the implementation of the subject.

However, these teachers need to be supported as a major way of motivating them. They are not supposed to be left alone with the hope that the problems they shall be going through will make them develop a tough skin. This may yield negative results because their teaching of Social Studies may be reduced to an exercise in implementing a set of activities predefined by policy makers, textbook authors, or a high-stakes test rather than making the teaching of Social Studies an exercise in creating a personally meaningful understanding of the way the world is and how one might act to transform that world (Mhlauli, 2012).

This implies that that school management and other teachers have the responsibility of giving non-specialist Social Studies teachers enough support. They have to be supported both materially and emotionally. Ignoring these teachers makes their working conditions tough and this may scare other non-specialist Social Studies teachers from accepting to teach the subject which is not their area of specialisation yet they may be capable of doing that.

As that is not enough, the findings also give the implication that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has a role to play in providing support to non-specialist Social Studies teachers in form of providing them with upgrading opportunities which may lead to their continuous professional development. The above mentioned Ministry is aware that up to now there are very few specialist Social Studies teachers meaning that the majority of teachers teaching the subject are non-specialists. Therefore, it implies that if non-specialist Social Studies teachers are given opportunities for upgrading and continuous professional development in Social Studies so that they become specialists in this subject, they are going to be motivated to promote the sustainability of the subject.

5.4 Areas for further Research

This study explored the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the subject in Central East Education secondary schools. It is, therefore, suggested that further studies need to be done in other education divisions throughout the country on the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in implementing the subject.

Apart from that, Social Studies is not the only subject that is taught by non-specialist teachers in Malawi. Here, it is also suggested that further studies need to be done on the experiences of teachers teaching those other subjects they were not qualified for. The findings from such studies may help to inform, support or challenge the action of introducing new subjects in the absence of specialist teachers to handle them in the processes of curriculum development and implementation.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the conclusions that have been drawn from the findings of this study. The presentation of the conclusions is followed by the implications of the findings and some recommendations that have been suggested based on the findings. These recommendations, if taken into account may help in improving the implementation of Social Studies by non-specialist teachers. Finally, areas for further research have also been suggested.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of introduction



Principal: Richard Tambulasi,

BA, (Pub Admin), PBA (Hons), MPA, Ph.D

Your Ref.:

01st October, 2012

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, MALAWI

Tel: (265) 01 524 222

Email: cats@cc.ac.mw

achauma@cc.ac.mw

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STUDIES DEPARTMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir,

Letter of Introduction for Mr Sebastian Jonathan Chiwala

I write to introduce **Mr Sebastian Jonathan Chiwala** as a Masters student at the University of Malawi's Chancellor College. He is in his research year of studies where he is supposed to conduct research and submit a thesis in partial fulfillment of the Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching studies (Social Studies Education) degree requirements. I would like to request for your favour in granting him permission to conduct the study

I look forward to your usual assistance.

Yours sincerely,

AM Chauma, PhD.

HOD, Curriculum and Teaching Studies

Appendix 2: Permission to conduct research

Ref.: CEED/03/13.

6th March, 2013.

FROM: The Education Division Manager, Central East
Education Division, Private Bag 233, Kasungu.

TO: The Head teachers concerned.

MASTERS DEGREE RESEARCH

Permission has been granted to **Sebastian Jonathan Chiwala** to carry out research in some schools within the division.

Please assist him with all the information he would require for his research.

Yours faithfully



T.M. Mkandawire



ACTING EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (CEED)

Appendix 3: Request for permission to conduct research

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
Post Office Box 280
Zomba

20th October 2012

The Head teacher
_____ Secondary School

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMISSION

My name is Sebastian Jonathan Chiwala, a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching Studies student in at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am conducting an academic research on the topic: **“Exploring Non-Specialist Teachers’ Experiences in Implementing Social Studies in Malawi Secondary Schools: The Case of Central East Education Division”**.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the subject in Central East Education Division (CEED) secondary schools in Malawi.

Your school is one of the schools that have been randomly sampled for this study. I would, therefore, like to request for your permission to allow me to hold individual interviews with two non-specialist Social Studies teachers at your school. These teachers are preferably those who are teaching forms one and three.

I will keep the identities of my participants’ confidential and there’s no risk anticipated in this study.

Looking forward to your assistance.

Yours faithfully



Sebastian J. Chiwala

Appendix 4: Interview guide for non-specialist Social Studies teachers

What experiences do non-specialist Social Studies teachers have in implementing the subject.

A. Teachers' experiences

1. How do you feel when teaching Social Studies?
2. What are your thoughts and beliefs about the outcome of teaching Social Studies?
3. How do you look at the potential of the outcome of teaching Social Studies?

B. Factors that affect implementation of social studies

1. What are the factors that positively affect you in the implementation of the subject?
2. What are the factors that negatively affect you in the implementation of the subject?
3. What challenges do you face in implementing Social Studies as a non-specialist teacher of this subject?

C. Coping Mechanisms

1. How do you deal with the challenges that you face in teaching Social Studies as a non-specialist teacher?
2. What coping mechanisms do you use in teaching the subject in order to be successful?
3. What else can you say on this issue?

THE END.

Appendix 5: Lesson observation checklist

A. Background Information

1. Participant Code: _____
2. School Code: _____
3. Date of observation: _____
4. Class: _____
5. Subject: _____
6. Theme: _____
7. Topic: _____
8. Number of learners: _____

B. Lesson preparation

1. Lesson plan/lesson notes	
2. Lesson objectives	
3. Teaching and learning resources	

C. Actual Lesson Observation

Items to be observed	Comment
Introduction	
Development	
1. Clarity of facts	
2. Mastery of the subject matter	
3. Use of teaching and learning resources	
4. Learners involvement	
5. Classroom environment	
6. Teacher enthusiasm	
7. Learners' feedback	
8. Conclusion	

D. General Impressions

THE END

Appendix 6: Consent form for teacher participation in the research

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER PARTICIPATION

I am a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching Studies at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am conducting an academic research on the topic: **“Exploring Non-Specialist Teachers’ Experiences in Implementing Social Studies in Malawi Secondary Schools: The Case of Central East Education Division”**.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of non-specialist Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the subject in Central East Education Division (CEED) secondary schools in Malawi.

I am requesting you to participate in this study. However, the following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study.

- You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time.
- The activities you will be involved in are answering open ended questions on non-specialist Social Studies teachers’ experiences on implementing the subject for a maximum of about one hour. This will be followed by lesson observation upon making arrangements for the date and time.
- No risk is expected. Participation in this research is confidential. The confidentiality will be protected by the use of pseudonyms on all tapes, transcripts, class observation checklist and final research product. All data will be kept in a secure place and will be destroyed at the completion of the research.
- No information about you, or provided by you during the research, will be shared with others without your written permission. Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study, either before participating or during the time that you are participating.

Please, sign this consent form with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the study. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Signature of participant..... Date

Signature of researcher..... Date

Sebastian Jonathan Chiwala /Researcher